SPECIAL MENTIONS

Need for provision of safe motherhood for all women of India

SHRIMATI SHABANA AZMI (Nominated) : Madam, it is a crime and shame that five decades after Independence, we still have not been able to provide safe motherhood for our women. Tomorrow, on Kasturba Gandhi's birthday, we are going to celebrate Janani Suraksha Divas, and it is with regard to this that my Special Mention is on the provision of safe motherhood for all women of India as we celebrate Janani Suraksha Divas.

Every year, over one lakh women in India die of complications related to pregnancy and childbirth. This would be equivalent to two Airbuses crashing every day. The majority of these women are from the most vulnerable strata of our society, poor and marginalised, tribal and scheduled castes. It is a shame that fifty years after Independence, one woman is still dying every five minutes from maternity complications. When a mother dies, her baby has six to ten times greater chance of dying as well. The majority of these deaths are preventable. Women in rural areas and urban slums need access to basic and emergency medical care during pregnancy, childbirth and post-partum period. Every pregnancy faces risk. Families and countries need a Birth Preparedness Plan. This requires specially skilled health personnel in rural areas, transportation to reach hospital, and 24 hour emergency services to manage complications, including blood transfusions. Health personnel including ANMs need to be trained in life saving skills to be able to appropriately respond to emergencies. It is a sorry state of affairs that health is not given the priority it deserves in our country. Strong intervention is required from the Centre to ensure that States with low health indices receive appropriate financial allocations. As we celebrate Janani Suraksha Divas, I would urge the Government to treat safe motherhood as not just a health issue but as a fundamental human right and commit itself to reducing deaths in childbirth within a fixed time frame.

SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA (Tamil Nadu): Madam, I associate myself with the hon. Member.

श्रीमती सरला माहेश्वरी (पश्चिमी बंगाल) : महोदया, मैं अपने को इस स्पैशल मैंशन से सम्बद्ध करते हुए माननीय मंत्री महोदया से यह कहना चाहूंगी कि वे एक महिला मंत्री हैं और इस नाते वे महिलाओं की पीड़ा को अच्छी तरह से समझ सकती हैं। इसलिए यह जो हमारा

मूलभूत अधिकार है, उस अधिकार की आप गारंटी दिलाएं। इस देश में कम से कम सुरक्षित मातृत्व की गारंटी आप दिलाएं।

श्रीमती सविता शारदा (गुजरात) : महोदया, मैं अपने को इस स्पैशल मैंशन से सम्बद्ध करती हूँ।

प्रो. रामबख्श सिंह वर्मा (उत्तर प्रदेश) : महोदया, पूरा हाऊस इससे एसोसिऐट करता है।

उपसभापति : हां, फादर्स को भी करना चाहिए।

स्वास्थ्य और परिवार कल्याण मंत्री तथा संसदीय कार्य मंत्री (श्रीमती सुषमा स्वराज) : महोदया, 11 अप्रैल के दिन को "जननी सुरक्षा दिवस" के नाम पर घोषित करना, अपने आप में इस बात का संकेत है कि भारत सरकार इस बात के लिए कितनी चिंतित है और कितनी समर्पित है। अभी जैसा माननीय सदस्या ने कहा कि राष्ट्रपिता महात्मा गांधी जी की धर्मपत्नी कस्तूरबा गांधी जी के जन्मदिवस को हमने "जननी सुरक्षा दिवस" यानी "Safe Motherhood Day" घोषित किया है और एक नयी योजना हम उसके लिए प्रारंभ कर रहे हैं। जो भावनाएं यहां सदन में व्यक्त की गई हैं, उन भावनाओं के साथ सिर्फ विपक्षी बेंच ही सम्बद्ध नहीं कर रहे हैं, उनसे केवल सत्ता पक्ष ही सम्बद्ध नहीं कर रहा है, बल्कि स्वयं सरकार की ओर से मैं अपने आपको सम्बद्ध करते हुए इन्हें आश्वासन देती हूँ कि महिला स्वास्थ्य हमारी प्राथमिकताओं मे है और रहेगा।

उपसभापति : चेयर भी एसोसिऐट कर रही है। Thank you for celebrating tomorrow as a special day for mothers. If something substantial comes out it, it will be good.

Need for providing waterways transport facility between Chennai and Kanyakumari

SHRI R. KAMARAJ (Tamil Nadu): Madam, I wish to draw the attention of the Government to the urgent need to develop waterways between Chennai and Kanyakumari to meet the heavy demand of passenger and goods traffic in the region. Since there is increasing traffic congestion on the road and rail traffic, the Government has to exploit the possibilities of inland waterways traffic. For travelling a distance of 703 kms between Chennai and Kanyakumari by road or rail, it takes about 15 hours. If waterways transport is used this distance can be reached in about 8 hours. Such a scheme will save fuel and time, and fare will be affordable even by a common man. Along the East Coast, between Chennai and Kanyakumari, there are famous places like Mamallapuram, Pondicherry, Chidambaram, Pichavaram, Poombukar, Nagore, Vellankanni, Kodiyakaraj, Rameswaram,